

## HIDDEN VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING NOTES - SEPTEMBER 25, 2008



Prepared 9/25/08 by Kirsten Reynolds, City of Auburn Community Services with minor corrections by Rich Wagner, 10/27/08

On September 25, 2008 the City of Auburn Mayor and City staff met with neighbors of Hidden Valley at 4604 47<sup>th</sup> Street SE.

**Staff in Attendance:** MAYOR PETE LEWIS, COMMUNITY SERVICES MANAGER DUANNA RICHARDS, COMMUNITY SERVICES PROJECT ASSISTANT KIRSTEN REYNOLDS, POLICE CHIEF JIM KELLY, VRFA ADMINISTRATOR ERIC ROBERTSON, ASSISTANT CITY ENGINEER INGRID GAUB, PRINCIPAL PLANNER JEFF DIXON AND SENIOR PLANNER KAREN SCHARER.

**Community Members in Attendance:** RICH & KAY WAGNER, ALEKSEY OGORODNIK, ANN & RICH BANKHEAD, BOB & NORA FREITAS, DARYL THOMPSON, DAVID & CARMELA PONIS, DON PHELPS, GREG & LOUISE BARTOL, ILENE HUSTON, JIM & HEIDI HILL, JONIE BROOKE, LANE & EVIE BILLS, MAY VANG, MICKEY FASSBIND, NAOMI ROMCALLI-HUSO, NEAL HOUGH, ORLYNN BARNETT, PAUL GALENO, PAULA & BILL ANDERSON, PAULETTE TIMM, RON KIRSE & JENNY BIRD, ROSEMARY ADAMSKI & RANDY WINTER, TOM & JOANNE MACNAB AND TRUDY CLIPPINGER

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Rich Wagner opened the meeting by introducing City staff and welcoming neighbors to the meeting. Everyone involved with the Block Watch group was asked to verify their contact information after the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Lewis facilitated the audience participation portion of the meeting and discussed a variety of topics, including, but not limited to:

### **General Questions/Comments**

- There was a report of group mailboxes getting vandalized; the structures are not very durable. A resident wanted to know why they couldn't make their own mailboxes to ensure security. Group mailboxes are mandated by the Federal Government and everyone must comply with their standards, including the City.
- Where can people go to get assistance with food? Auburn has one of the best food banks; they offer a variety of ways to get food to people. Mayor added that residents are always welcome to contact the Community Services team with questions like this.
- Auburn contracts with an Animal Control officer from King County; this partnership has been working out very well. The largest problem is where to put the animals, currently they are taken to the animal shelter in Kent. If residents need to get in touch with the Animal Control officer they should call 9-1-1.

### **Police Related Questions/Comments**

- Auburn shares ownership of the 9-1-1 system with several other cities. The calls go into a dispatch center so residents shouldn't worry about tying up the phone line when making non-emergency calls. When you call 9-1-1 it will be answered by a "Call Receiver." The

Call Receiver will determine whether or not your call is an emergency to be handled right away or to have an officer make contact with you to file a non-emergency report. They will ask questions which are specifically designed to obtain information so a proper response can be taken for your call. Residents were advised to call 9-1-1 for all emergencies and non-emergency issues such as street lights out, stop lights out, missing stop signs, fireworks, loose dogs, etc.

- Block Watch – Mayor Lewis commented the Hidden Valley neighborhood has one of the best organized and involved Block Watch groups in Auburn. Residents asked to have more Block Watch signs installed. Currently one sign is located on 53<sup>rd</sup> and the second sign is located on Foster. The Police will assist in getting more Block Watch signs and putting them up.
- What is the criminal activity like and are Police patrols going to be increased? Auburn has more Police officers than ever before. Crime stats show a decrease in the last five years; Police response time is currently down to three minutes and one second for top priority emergencies. Because officers work out of their vehicles they have been able to increase patrols around the city. Mayor reassured with consistent Block Watch activities this will help keep criminal activity down.
- Mayor talked about the formation and growth of the Valley Regional Fire Authority (VRFA). A year before Auburn's annexation of Lea Hill and West Hill, the cities of Algona and Pacific joined Auburn in the formation of the VRFA to better serve the surrounding areas effectively. The three cities still have control over the VRFA, one Mayor and two Councilmembers govern the group. Each partnering City keeps ownership of real property.

The VRFA will build a new six bay fire station in the south end area of Auburn to help support the next 30-50 years of growth. The project is projected to break ground in December 2008 and to be completed in November 2009. Citizens can check out the plans for this new station on-line at [www.vrfa.org](http://www.vrfa.org). VRFA Administrator Eric Robertson commented once this south end fire station is built response times will be reduced even further. There was discussion about the truck fleet VRFA utilizes, which includes a water tank truck from Bonney Lake; VRFA has no plan to obtain their own water tank truck. All fire engines are equipped with trained EMTs and Firefighters.

People voted to change the property tax structure to charge off the size and type of a structure; passing with a 69% approval in 2006. The VRFA revenue is from a 1% per thousand of assessed valuation and the fire benefit charge, which is derived from the size (square feet) and use (residential v. commercial) of the structure. The funding to build this new south end fire station was obtained through a 20 year construction bond and a match, which received 65% approval last February. The bond will also remodel the R Street Fire Station, the Lea Hill Station and provide for the purchase of a ladder truck.

### **Traffic Related Questions/Comments**

- Residents thanked the Mayor for getting the three-way stop installed on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Randall Ave SE.
- There was discussion regarding the PhotoSAFE system. Mayor Lewis noted there has been a 40% reduction of accidents and not one fatality accident in those intersections since the cameras were put in. He also clarified that while gross receipts from the system were over \$900,000 for the year, costs to pay to install and administer the system were over

\$740,000. Since the City Council took action to ensure the net proceeds from PhotoSAFE would go towards neighborhood traffic calming improvements in Auburn's communities at least \$165,000 a year has gone toward local traffic calming improvements such as stop signs, speed bumps, flashing lights, etc. It was noted that the 2009 scheduling of traffic calming projects in our neighborhoods might end depending upon the results of the vote on Tim Eyman's I-985, which would transfer the proceeds from PhotoSAFE from local municipalities to the State. Without this funding the neighborhood traffic calming program could be in jeopardy.

- What is the City doing to be proactive and alleviate the commuter parking issues in downtown? Sound Transit built only half of what they originally planned. They have a ballot measure coming to vote that will help fund additional parking garages at many of the Sounder stations, including Auburn's. The City of Sumner has been pushing Sound Transit to build a garage at the foot of Lake Tapps Parkway. Auburn will have a shuttle service from Lakeland Hills Sunset Park starting in the spring of 2009, the Lea Hill area will follow. Mayor Lewis has held meetings with Pierce Transit in efforts to get bus service in and around the south part of Auburn.
- A question was raised concerning the status of work and a drainage issue related to a residents driveway at the intersection of 53<sup>rd</sup> and Kersey Way. Mayor Lewis indicated that staff would follow up on the drainage issue. Assistant City Engineer Ingrid Gaub clarified that the work on 53<sup>rd</sup> was not yet completed and that sidewalks will also be going in on 53<sup>rd</sup> where the curb has been placed.
- Save Our Streets Program (SOS) - A chip seal will be put on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street. Once this street is brought up to a pavement condition index level of seventy it will be maintained at that level. R Street and several other streets from 17<sup>th</sup> St SE to R Street SE is finally getting redone; the old clay sewer pipes in these roads will be replaced for the first time since the 1960's. The bad news is that half the street will be torn up and street closures will impact the area for a full construction season.

### **Development**

- Kersey development I and II was discussed. Auburn wants responsible development and will condition development and require all standard conditions to be met.
- Super Wal-Mart – The new site to be developed is located in the NW corner of the SuperMall parking lot. The old building will be demolished.
- There were several questions regarding the Segale property.
  - 1) Is the City allowing for higher density to be developed? They will have to develop at present standards when they apply; they have approximately 20 years before the gravel pit is finished being mined.
  - 2) Will there be enough water once this development is started? No, but a large development would not be permitted without an adequate water source. Mayor Lewis clarified that Segale does not own the water rights on their property nor have they punched a deep well on the property. The visible water on the property is used to wash gravel; it is then pumped back into the ground.

Mayor Lewis talked about the lack of water in the area and the issue with Lake Tapps being for sale. Approximately three years ago when Lake Tapps was drained it affected the surrounding aquifers. Auburn, Sumner and Bonney Lake are working together

in efforts to purchase Lake Tapps, which would provide adequate water to the area for future growth; Auburn has been asked to take on some of the region's 1.6 million more people as reflected in the State's Growth Management Plan.

- The Lakeland area originally had three wells; two were redeveloped when the City of Auburn took the area over. Some of Lakeland currently is not on City water, but the new Kersey development was required to install pipes and a booster pump station facility to provide additional water from the valley to the Lakeland area. One third of Lakeland is on Bonney Lake's water supply.
- There was a comment that the corner turning off Kersey into the Hidden Valley neighborhood was made too sharp. Mayor said he would get some additional information regarding why it was designed this way.
- Is the Kersey road development done and when is the new portion of Evergreen Way scheduled to open? Assistant City Engineer Ingrid Gaub replied that the opening of the new roadway will not occur until the improvements are completed and accepted by the City and the developers have completed the final platting for the project.

Additional information regarding Kersey was discussed including the details on the water line which was run all the way down East Valley Highway/A Street to the development at the intersection with Lake Tapps Parkway. Kersey Way striping is not complete at the intersection, it will be completed at the time the new signal at the intersection of 53<sup>rd</sup> is completed. In addition, the application of the pavement markings will require dry weather conditions.

Mayor talked about the requirements put on the Kersey developers. When the infrastructure is put in and the City inspects it, approval for development will be given. Kersey is accruing a huge amount of debt; until they build and sell homes they have no income coming in from this development.

Mayor Lewis spoke about the unemployment rate and the general struggle our local/regional economy is having right now. Companies are still coming into Washington State and there is not enough housing to meet the rapid population growth.

### **Planning Related Questions/Comments**

- Are there any zoning changes proposed for the area? Mayor Lewis explained that Environmentalists have requested the City require four units per an acre as a way to increase density while keeping open space. The City's plan is to encourage density in the urban center / valley floor.
- What is the City doing to attract retail to the downtown area? Mayor Lewis talked about six different blocks that have planned activity. The City has assembled 26 parcels in the downtown area to promote development. One block is owned by the Auburn Regional Hospital, where they are in the process of building a parking garage. Another block, also known as the tavern block, will be demolished to make way for an Annex Building which should start soon. The block where Marvel Foods is located has plans to be transformed into a five story building with a mixed use focus. The SE blocks are owned by the City and will be built out in the spring of 2010. The Cavanaugh block is currently on the market at \$7.4 million; when it does sell the City plans to ensure whatever gets built there will tie in with the surrounding plans.

## **Summary of Solutions Discussed/Action Items**

- The Community would like to have more Block Watch signs installed; they currently have one on 53<sup>rd</sup> and the second on Foster. Mayor Lewis stated that the City will assist in getting more signs and putting them up, Police will follow up on this.
- Community Services Team contact information:
  - Duanna Richards, Community Services Manager, 253-931-3099 or [drichards@auburnwa.gov](mailto:drichards@auburnwa.gov)
  - Kirsten Reynolds, Community Services Project Assistant, 253-876-1964, or [kreynolds@auburnwa.gov](mailto:kreynolds@auburnwa.gov)